

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00
AID-05 IGA-02 /062 W
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P R 141930Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2781

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1080

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BB

SUBJECT: NEGOTIATIONS ON CONTNUED USE OF US NAVAL FACILITY, BARBADOS

SUMMARY: BARBADIANS, STRESSING PREPARATORY NATURE OF TALKS, PROBED FOR US WILLINGNESS TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO PAYMENTS ALLEGEDLY DUE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS IN CONNECTION WITH 1961 AGREEMENT BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT. US QUESTIONED LEGAL OBLIGATION TO MAKE RETROACTIVE PAYMENT FOR OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE CHARGES, BUT INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO STUDY SPECIFIC GOB PROPOSALS. US ALSO PRESENTED PROPOSALS OF RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT TO 1988, WITH ANNUAL RENTAL FEE OF \$300,000. WHILE BARBADIAN TEAM TENTATIVELY SET MEETING FOR NEXT DAY (MAY 13) THIS WAS CANCELLED, REPORTEDLY AT DIRECTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER FORDE SHORTLY AFTER CLOSE OF MEETING. END SUMMARY

1. BARBADOS MINEXTAFF PERMSEC SYMMONDS OPENED BY STRESSING IMPORTANCE TO NEW BARBADIAN GOVERNMENT OF US AGREEMENT " IN PRINCIPLE" FOR PAYMENT FOR PAST USAGE OF BARBADOS NAVAL FACILITY, MENTIONING IN PARTICULAR USG OBLIGATION UNDER 1961 AGREEMENT TO
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CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS, REPAIR OF ROADS, AND TRAINING. HE SAID GOB BELIEVES IT SHOULD NOT ENTER NEW AGREEMENT WITHOUT SETTLING "OUTSTANDING SUMS" UNDER OLD AGREEMENT. GOB HAD ASKED FOR DATA FROM USG ON WHICH TO BASE ITS CALCULATIONS, SOME OF WHICH HAD ONLY RECENTLY BEEN PROVIDED AND WAS STILL BEING DIGESTED. THUS GOB

REGARDED CURRENT TALKS AS EXPLORATORY IN NATURE.

2. CLAIMING 1961 AGREEMENT MADE WITHOUT BARBADIAN PARTICIPATION, SYMMONDS SAID GOB HAD NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED OVER THE YEARS FOR PRESENCE OF US FACILITY. HE SAID US DID NOT PAY RENT, SHARE INFORMATION PRODUCED AT THE FACILITY, NOR CONDUCT A SUBSTANTIAL AID PROGRAM IN BARBADOS. IN CONSIDERING DESIRABILITY OF NEW AGREEMENT, BARBADIA POLITICAL LEVELS WOULD OBVIOUSLY EXAMINE US PERFORMANCE UNDER OLD AGREEMENT. GOB BELIEVED THAT FAILURE OF PREVIOUS BARBADIAN GOVERNMENTS TO RAISE PAYMENT ISSUE IN PRIOR YEARS DID NOT RELIEVE US OF ITS OBLIGATIONS.

3. US (HEAVNER) SAID UNDER ANY NEW AGREEMENT US BELIEVED BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD JOINTLY AGREE ON FORMULA FOR FUTURE SUPPORT OF AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE, RELATED TO EXTENT OF US USAGE AND PREVALENT COMMERCIAL LANDING FEES. REGARDING RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS FOR THIS PURPOSE, WE QUESTIONED US OBLIGATION TO PAY WHEN THERE HAD BEEN NO SUBSIDIARY AGREEMENT REACHED (AS CALLED FOR IN THE 1961 AGREEMENT), NOR REQUEST FOR ONE, AND DATA RE AIRPORT USAGE IN PRIOR YEARS IS NOT COMPLETE. IN THIS SITUATION, IT WOULD BE LEGALLY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY DIFFICULT FOR USG TO MEET GOB CLAIMS ON AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE ISSUE. HOWEVER, US SIDE EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO STUDY GOB PROPOSALS ON PAST AIRPORT O AND M, SHOULD GOB BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH A SPECIFIC

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AND REASONABLE FIGURE. BE END OF SESSION, BARBADIAN TEAM HAD NOT COMMITTED ITSELF TO MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL. RE GOB CLAIM ON ROADS, US TEAM SAID WORDING OF 1961 AGREEMENT ON SUPPORT OF ROAD REPAIR WAS CLEARLY RELATED TO "DAMAGE" AND NOT RPT NOT TO WEAR AND TEAR. (AFTER CONSULTING AGREEMENT AND ADVISORS, SYMMONDS APPEARED SURPRISED AND DID NOT PURSUE THIS POINT.)

4. US TEAM OUTLINED INITIAL US OFFER ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: (A) EXTENSION OF PRESENT TERMS OF 1961 WEST INDIES AGREEMENT THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 1988, SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISIONS TO UP-DATE TEXT: (B) A SUBSIDIARY LEASE, RENEWABLE ANNUALLY AT US OPTION, WITH A RENT CONSIDERATION OF \$300,000 ANNUALLY.

5. WITHOUT RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO US OFFER, SYMMONDS SAID GOB HAD TO CONSIDER WHETHER BARBADOS IS MILITARILY DISADVANTAGED, OR MORE LIABLE TO HOSTILE ATTACK, BY REASON OF PRESENCE OF US MILITARY BASE.

ALSO, GOB MUST CONSIDER IMPACT ON GOB RELATIONS WITH THE "THIRD WORLD." US AID LATTER POINT IS FOR GOB TO DETERMINE, BUT ON FORMER, NAVFAC BARBADOS IS NOT AN OPERATIONAL "BASE" AND IN OUR VIEW CHANCE OF ANY ATTACK ON THE FACILITY IS REMOTE.

6. BARBADIANS RETURNED TO LACK OF US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OVER THE YEARS, DESPITE PRESENCE OF FACILITY AND FRIENDLY BILATERAL TIES. GOB DID NOT WISH TO LINK AID QUESTION WITH RENEWAL OF FACILITY, BUT US AID IS A FACTOR IN GOB'S CALCULATIONS. US SIDE REITERATED VIEWS ON CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND AGAINST "LINKAGE" OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY FACILITIES ISSUES, ALONG LINES GIVEN ANTIGUAN'S EARLIER (BRIDGETOWN 1059).

7. COMMENT: BARBADIAN ATTITUDE WAS INITIALLY
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COOL, BUT AS US UNFOLDED ITS POSITION, ATMOSPHERE WARMED NOTICEABLY. BARBADIANS BACKED OFF ON ROAD CHARGES AND SEEMED SOMEWHAT MOLLIFIED AT US WILLINGNESS TO STUDY PAST AIRPORT O AND M ISSUE AND INCLUDE RENT PAYMENT IN FUTURE AGREEMENT. BY END OF SESSION, BARBADIAN TEAM APPARENTLY FOUND SITUATION WARRANTED FURTHER DISCUSSION FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT, AND TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED SECOND MEETING FOR NEXT MORNING (MAY 13) TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TIME FOR INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS. SYMMONDS ALSO INVITED HEAVNER AND CHARGE TO LUNCH MAY 13. HOWEVER, SYMMONDS CALLED CHARGE JUST AFTER LATTER'S RETURN TO EMBASSY TO CANCEL MAY 13 MEETING ON ORDERS OF FOREIGN MINISTER FORDE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2524109
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEGOTIATIONS ON CONTNUED USE OF US NAVAL FACILITY, BARBADOS SUMMARY: BARBADIANS, STRESSING PREPARATORY NATURE OF TALKS, PROBED FOR US WILLINGNESS TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO
TAGS: MARR, BB, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/334ad593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009